



State Senator

JUNE 19, 2006

VALDE GARCIA

Serving the 22nd District

Shiawassee-Livingston-southern Ingham counties

COFFEE BREAK NEWS

Legislation would help farmers reduce pollution

Members of the Senate and representatives of Michigan's leading agricultural industries are calling on the governor to approve legislation that will help farmers reduce pollution and odor while also producing renewable energy.

The Senate recently passed Senate Bill 538 that will help Michigan farmers access loans for agricultural energy production systems. Representatives of the Michigan Agri-Business Association, the Michigan Allied Poultry Association, the Michigan Milk Producers and the Michigan Pork Producers all signed a letter urging the governor to sign the measure. Similar legislation was vetoed in 2004.

Methane digesters, one of the most common types of agricultural energy production systems, process animal waste using treatment technology that yields methane gas, and at the same time reduces the volume of solids and liquids. The systems neutralize harmful pathogens and reduce disturbing odors and energy produced can be used to generate electricity for the local farm operation, or it can be sold on the energy market.

Senate bill to protect cell-phone records passes in the House

A bill that would protect consumers against the fraudulent use of their cell-phone records unanimously passed the state House. Senate Bill 1202 would prohibit anyone from obtaining or selling a confidential telephone record without the prior authorization of the customer. Experts say that just a few personal facts about an individual can allow someone to pose as that person and obtain his phone records by fraud. Phone-service providers try to keep these records confidential, but con artists have found ways to deceive them and obtain personal information.

Legislation to promote safe driving passes the Senate

Motorists traveling on Michigan freeways could soon see signs reminding them to drive in the right lane and leave the left for passing, under legislation that passed the state Senate. Senate Bill 1127 was introduced to promote driving safety. Since 1949, Michigan law has stated that motorists must drive in the right lane and leave the left lane for passing. However, this law is often ignored, which can lead to unsafe driving conditions, road rage and traffic tickets for violators.

Under the legislation, signs stating the rule will be placed on limited access freeways, near Michigan's border and where the Michigan Department of Transportation deems necessary.

Senate committee moves to limit phosphorous in fertilizer

Michigan would have some of the toughest phosphorous regulations in the country under legislation passed through a Senate committee recently. The Senate Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism Committee approved Senate Bill 840 on a bipartisan vote, sending it to the full Senate. The measure would establish statewide limits on the amount of phosphorous in fertilizer for nonagricultural use. Phosphorous runoff promotes excessive algae and vegetation growth, affecting Michigan's lakes and streams.

Besides limiting the phosphorous content of fertilizer, the legislation would prohibit fertilizer from being applied:

- Within 10 feet from waters unless approved by the state
- To soil that is frozen or saturated to field capacity, and
- In a way that spreads fertilizer on roadways, parking lots, concrete, or similar areas that prevent the infiltration of water into the soil.